



# NU HOU DALA PAA

NEWS FROM THE HAWAII STATE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION AND THE HONOLULU COIN CLUB

VOL. 18 NO. 54

## HONOLULU RAPID TRANSIT (HRT)

BY KAZUMA OYAMA

On February 19, 1898, a meeting of five businessmen headed by Lorrin A. Thurston, resulted in the incorporation of the Honolulu Rapid Transit and Land Co. Ltd., for the purpose of building and operating an electric street railway system on the streets of Honolulu. This followed earlier attempts by others who started or tried to start a transit system for Honolulu.

In 1868, a Jim Sherwood started the "Pioneer Omnibus Line", a horse-drawn vehicle that folded a few years later due to lack of business.

In 1883, a William Flowerdew applied to build a tramway but gave up after many unsuccessful attempts in getting approval.

In 1884, a Bill Austin applied for a tramway franchise and immediately obtained the necessary authority but dropped the project after purchasing a few materials and supplies.

In 1887, a T. Graham Gribble had his crew grade and lay nearly fifteen miles of light rails. On December 28, 1888, Gribble's Hawaiian Tramways, Ltd. mule-car service was inaugurated. In 1889, William H. Pain took over as manager and in 1896, bought two small Fowler steam engines from England to pull the mule cars over the existing tram tracks. However, the poorly maintained tracks and the heavy little engines didn't work out.

On April 6, 1898, C.G. Ballentyne, general manager of HRT & L Co. Ltd., and the board of directors decided to adopt the single-suspension overhead system of power distribution. Some

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will remember this system that had overhead electric power lines spanning the space over the tracks. However, HRT & L was not the first company in the Territory of Hawaii to operate an electric railway. This honor goes to the Desley electric railway which operated from upper Nuuanu Ave. up the hill to the residential area of Pacific Heights.

In 1922, since HRT & L Co. wasn't in the land business, it dropped the "Land" and the name of the firm was officially changed to Honolulu Rapid Transit Co., Ltd. and it was popularly known as HRT until January 1, 1971, when the name was changed to Mass Transit Lines (MTL). At this time, the controlling interest in HRT was held by financier and philanthropist Harry Weinberg. Because of a contract dispute with the labor union, the City and County of Honolulu was contracted to operate the city's transit system in March 1971.

Much of the data for this article is quoted from Mr. Al Moniz's writings. Mr. Moniz was vice president/treasurer and director of HRT during 1961 - 1971, and on March 1, 1971, became president/general manager and director of MTL, Inc. until April 1, 1987.

In 1972, under the City's management, the system became known as "The Bus". This was the start of the island wide bus system, acquisition of many new buses and additional maintenance facilities on Middle Street and Halawa Valley. Today, we enjoy an Oahu island-wide transportation system. The off and on talks about a mass rail transit system from the central and leeward Oahu areas --when it becomes a reality it will certainly be a great step in further improvement of the public transportation system started by HRT.

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## HRT

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For Hawaiiana and transportation tokens and ticket collectors, HRT had a variety of tokens and tickets to offer - including the beautiful "Hula Girl" token which was made in quantity but never put into use. The earliest HRT tokens are dated 1923 and 1924, so it is assumed that from 1898 to 1923, the fare was by cash. Also, the date can be associated with the name change from HRT & L Co. to just HRT.



### The 1998 HSNA Medal

The second of the series of Hawaiian Transportation series is on sale. This year's transportation is the Honolulu Rapid Transit, remembering the trolley buses of the 1940's and 1950's. The obverse background shows City Hall of Honolulu at the intersection of King and Punchbowl streets. The reverse celebrates the Centennial Anniversary of Kaimuki and Wahiawa towns. The medals comes as a set of silver and bronze. They are 39mm in size with one ounce of .999 fine silver. The price is \$28.00 a set which includes postage and insurance. To order write to: H.S.N.A., P.O. Box 477, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96809.

### OLD IRISH BLESSING

May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be always at your back  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
May the rains fall soft upon your fields  
and until we meet again  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand

## MAHALO!



BY IRVING KAM

As with many of today's hobby organizations, be they non-profit or not, all rely firmly on its membership and associates for success. Even survival. On Oahu, the Honolulu Coin Club and the Hawaii State Numismatic Association have been experiencing a steady decline in the number of volunteers for years. Fortunately, said loss of manpower has been absorbed by the graciousness of the remaining workers and especially by a core group of members. The ones that always arrive early at every club project and are the last to leave. The ones that have no interest in the posing and posturing at convention time because the work goes on long after the flash bulbs and back patting have dissipated. The ones that always put forth that extra effort.

A round of applause and a sincere mahalo to Darlene Chee, Paul Luke, Crane Saito, Henry Sakata, Francis Ushiroda, Ski Von Wronski, Clifford Young and Wah Kui Young respectively. More often than not, that unassuming extra effort has made all the difference in the world.

Another warm mahalo to the following people for their frequently unheralded but always appreciated contributions: Al and Dorothy Baber for their goodwill and promotion they extend to the mainland on behalf of the H.S.N.A. The contingent of Big Island Coin Club members for their assistance in November and for overseeing the Educational Forum. A.N.A. Governor and past Regional Coordinator Helen L. Carmody for the uncalculable benefits and support she initiated here in addition to the warmth of a friendship.

Janice Cook of Castle Industries for the proficient manner in which she handles the reservations and all the obstacles it entails. The folks at Gulick Delicatessen and Coffee Shop (recent Ilima Award recipient) for all the great

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## MAHALO!

BY IRVING KAM

Continued from page 2

food at great prices. Karen Gurtiza of Kapalama School for her assistance in providing space for our Statehood Day Coin Show. Ronald Higashi and Gayle Haraki of Susannah Wesley Community Center for accomodating our club meetings, coin shows and Christmas parties for the past twenty or so years. Sally Kendrick for the hours she spends on the computer and the tons of detail work she probably won't admit to. Terrence Kim of McDonald's in Aina Haina for all the donations to our coin shows and our Christmas parties. Gary Lau and his ohana at Sweetheart's Lei Shop for the wonderful lei creations. Thomas Mato, Sr. and Thomas Mato, Jr. of Multi Printing Service for years and years of newsletters, posters, envelopes, etc. Kathleen Naipo for the years of proofreading and grammar corrections. Landis Niau of Krazee Kollectible for the generous use of his copying machine. Ms. Pat Ojiri of Washington Intermediate School for her help in securing the cafeteria for our H.S.N.A. Mini Show. Kazuma Oyama for the years of correspondence to the hobby clubs and publications including promotion of our wooden nickel program. Pake, Julie and Melave of Antique Alley for the printed and radio publicity as well as the window and shelf space they provide for our posters and flyers. The management and staff of the Queen Kapiolani Hotel for being very accomodating and efficient, especially during the hectic week of the H.S.N.A. convention: Shigeru Tomita (Executive General Manager), Gaylord Komoto (Assistant General Manager), Mary Guerrero (Banquet Manager), Donald Yoshimura (Front Desk Night Manager), Perkin Lee (Food and Beverage Director), Michelle Abe (Food and Beverage Secretary), Frank Hara (Banquet Porter), and Jocelyn Vallejos (Front Desk Clerk).

Former isle resident Jim Simek for the great free coin drawing event he introduced for the young numismatists at the H.S.N.A. convention.

Richard Yamamoto for all the professional photographic work over the years. In closing, a final mahalo to everyone for their help throughout the past three and a half decades. Space limitations and memory prohibits a listing individually but all of the support is truly appreciated and acknowledged.

Aloha! Pau.

## 9th Annual Hawaii Collectors' Expo '99



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## EXHIBITORS AT THE STATEHOOD COIN SHOW

The exhibitors at the August Statehood Coin show were Mark Yee, "Birds of a Feather Stamps and Coins"; Denis Tomiyasu, "Federal Reserve Web Notes 1988 and 1993"; Charlie Matsuda, "Texas Centennial US Dollar"; Francis Loo, "US Red Seal Notes \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10 and \$20"; Gary Tanaka, "Proof 5 cent Jefferson nickels--colored"; W.K. Young, "Federal Reserve Brick Notes \$1 and \$2" and "Silver Certificate \$1 including star --100 single bills"; Paul Luke, "Las Vegas playing cards"; and Crane Saito, "Honolulu Coin Club 30th and 35th Anniversary Medals".

We wish to thank all the exhibitors for their time and hard work in putting together their exhibits.

# Father Damien

BY CHARLES MATSUDA



The statues and memorials wooden token series No. 2 is on Father Damien. Father Damien's chosen name for his religious life was born on January 3, 1840, as Joseph de Veuster of Tremeloo, Belgium. The seventh child of eight children of Frans and Anne-Catherine de Veuster, they were raised as a very average family, living in a rural environment with a Christian religious faith. As a farmer, the work did not fulfill young Joseph. One day in 1858, Joseph heard a priest at a persuasive mission, who inspired him with his stirring sermon. This turned out to be his first step to his religious life. In January of 1859, Joseph joined the congregation as a postulant. Because of his limited education, he was not regarded as a candidate for priesthood by the Sacred Hearts Fathers. Soon he took the religious name of Brother Damien, hoping that one day he would be able to enter the life of priesthood. In 1860, Brother Damien took his vows as a brother of the Sacred Hearts Congregation and remained at the Mother house for a year, then went to Louvain for theological studies for two years. One day in 1863, there was an urgent call by Bishop Louis Maigret Vicar Apostolic from the Hawaiian Islands. The Sacred Hearts Fathers answered the call for six priests and brothers and ten sisters for the islands. Among the group of missionaries was Brother Damien who went in place of Father Pamphile who came down with typhus. He had received permission of the Superior General in Paris.

The long trip to Hawaii took place from the German port city of Bremerhaven aboard the sailing ship R.M. Wood. They sailed across the Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope, and

into the Pacific. The trip took about five months, reaching Honolulu on March 19, 1864. On May 21, 1864, Damien was ordained into the priesthood at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in downtown Honolulu. Father Damien was soon sent on an assignment to the Puna district of the Big Island of Hawaii. After a year he was transferred to Kohala and Hamakua districts. As the years went by, Father Damien became fluent in Hawaiian and his resourcefulness assured his success in his most famous mission, the leprosy settlement on Molokai. He spent his last sixteen years of his life helping the people of Kalaupapa until his death on April 15, 1889.

His memorial statue was designed by Marisol Escobar, a sculptress who first carved Father Damien's statue in wood. She loved to do wood work carving, which Father Damien loved to do also. The statue was finally cast in bronze. According to Miss Escobar, she did the sculpture simply, directly and sturdily--the qualities that Father Damien displayed to the lepers.

The statue was unveiled at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. in April 1969 and also stands tall in front of the footsteps of the Hawaii State Capitol Building.

The second series wooden tokens of the statues and memorial series on Father Damien will be available in November and cost 50c per wood plus a self addressed stamped envelope. Please add more postage if ordering more than one. Mail your request to: Honolulu Coin Club, P.O. Box 6063, Honolulu, Hawaii 96818.



## Birds of Hawaii

### HCC BIRD SERIES



Birds of Hawaii No. 7 series featuring the 'Tiwi' is still available. The 'Tiwi', a very beautiful honeycreeper is brightly vermillion red in color with black wings and tail and can be seen on the main islands of Hawaii, Maui, Oahu and Kauai in the upper slopes of the rain forest. They live on the nectars of the ohia and mamane flowers and insects.

The medals come as a set (silver and bronze) in a beautiful pink envelope. They are 39mm in size. The silver has one ounce of .999 fine silver. The cost is \$28.00 including postage and insurance. To order, write to Honolulu Coin Club, P.O. Box 6063, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96808.

### IN MEMORIAM

We were sad to hear of the passing of one of our coin and currency dealers, Harry "Dutch" Steensen, 56. He was at many of our HSNA November coin shows and also at the HCC coin shows. He is survived by his lovely wife, Sarah; sons, Harry and Johanas; daughter, Caroline and other relatives. Aloha "Dutch".



ARE YOU WORKING MORE THESE DAYS AND ENJOYING IT LESS? RELAX AND JOIN A COIN CLUB...

COME TO THE MEETINGS.

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## Season Greetings

Aloha and  
Best Wishes to All!!

from the HSNA and the  
Honolulu Coin Club.

## Honolulu Coin Club

The Honolulu Coin Club still meets at the ~~Keweenaw~~ Every second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 7:30 pm. Come and join us. Free door prizes, and a auction at every meetings. Open to the public.



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Honolulu Coin Club

The Honolulu Coin Club meets every  
second and fourth Wednesday of each  
month at Susannah Wesley Community  
Center at 1117 Kaili Street, 7:30 p.m.  
Gregory Hunt, president.